



# City of Westminster, Maryland

News and Notes  
October 2020 Issue

## Mailing Address:

56 West Main Street  
Suite 1  
Westminster, MD  
21157

## Important Phone Numbers:

Police  
410-848-4646

Finance/Billing  
410-848-3255

Recreation & Parks  
410-751-5501



.Westminster, Maryland: Holiday schedule changes, inclement weather and emergency information

.City of Westminster Recreation & Parks Department: Events, parade information, fitness classes, park openings

.Downtown Westminster, Maryland: News about Downtown Westminster, from business openings and specials to events and business news

.Westminster Fiber Network: Keep up to date with the WFN

## Mayor and Common Council News

The City's adopted Strategic Plan identifies five key focus areas – or Critical Success Factors – to serve as the collective work plan for 2018 – 2021. They are Responsible Stewardship of City Resources, A Safe and Livable Community, Strong Partnerships and an Engaged Community, Economic Activity and Growth, and Water and Sewer Capacity for Future Generations. Priority projects have been identified for each of the five Critical Success Factors to guide the future work of City staff, so that the Mayor and Common Council's vision for the City of Westminster is realized.

One of the priority projects included under Responsible Stewardship of City Resources is the determination of the future use of Wakefield Valley Park (the City-owned property formerly known as the Wakefield Valley Golf Course). As part of that, the Strategic Plan envisioned development of a master plan for the Park.

The City's FY 2021 budget includes funding for the plan's development, including a grant award from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. On September 14, 2020, the Mayor and Common Council authorized execution of a contract with Pennoni Associates, Inc. to assist the City with the development of the master plan. The master plan will provide a foundation for the future phased development of the property, so that it can serve as a cornerstone of the City's park system. It will also lay the groundwork for future City grant applications to finance park improvements.

Development of the master plan for Wakefield Valley Park will allow plenty of opportunities for the community to provide input. These opportunities will be publicized on the City's website and social media sites, so please get involved!

Work will soon get underway for an historic structure assessment of the Durbin House, located on the Wakefield Valley property. The Durbin House was built in 1767 and later served as the original clubhouse for the golf course. It has historic significance relating to the origins of the Methodist movement, and is listed on the Maryland Historical Trust Inventory of Historic Properties; it is also identified as a Carroll County Historic Site. The historic structure assessment, funded in part by a Maryland Heritage Areas Authority grant, will document and recommend immediate and interim measures to protect the structure; identify potential, future public use and interpretive opportunities; and, develop a phased renovation strategy for the structure.

## Community Planning and Development

By State law, the City's restaurants and other businesses continue to be allowed to operate at reduced capacity. The Community Planning and Development staff are collaborating with the business community on alternative ways to serve their customers in light of these restrictions, including outdoor dining and activities.

On September 10, 2020, the Planning and Zoning Commission conditionally approved a site plan application for Royal Farms convenience store and gas pumps at the intersection of MD Route 97 and Corporate Center Court.



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## City Services and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Westminster government operations are largely back to pre-coronavirus pandemic conditions. Provided below is information on the current status of City facilities, as well as public meetings.

- With the approval of the Health Officer for Carroll County, the City has re-opened all of its outdoor recreational facilities. They include parks; park pavilions; playgrounds; basketball, tennis, and pickleball courts; and, the Skate Park. Users are encouraged to practice proper hygiene and follow the recommended 6-foot physical distancing guideline. Park pavilions and playground equipment should be used at your own risk; the City cannot sanitize equipment. Always wash hands after using park equipment. Please note that public bathroom facilities remain closed at this time.
- The Westminster Fitness Center continues to operate, with safety measures in place to protect guests and employees. As required by the State, entrants will be monitored until 50% capacity is reached. Masks are required at all times, unless engaging in physical activities where the use of a face covering is likely to pose a safety risk.
- Meetings of the Mayor and Common Council, as well as those of City boards/commissions, continue to be held virtually. The meetings are live-streamed through the City's Facebook page and available to view by visiting [www.facebook.com/WestminsterMD](https://www.facebook.com/WestminsterMD). Those wishing to submit testimony for public hearings or to offer comments under the Citizen Comments portion of the Mayor and Common Council meeting agenda can send an email to City Clerk Shannon Visosky at [Comments@westgov.com](mailto:Comments@westgov.com).
- City administrative offices at 56 West Main and the Police Department lobby remain closed to the public.
- Staff members who can productively work remotely are continuing to do so, to limit the number of employees in City offices. The City has taken measures to ensure physical distancing, including staggered work schedules and lunch breaks, to protect employees working onsite.
- On July 27, 2020, the Mayor and Common Council voted to cancel the City's remaining events for 2020 due to continued concerns about the potential risk of COVID-19 -- at least in their traditional form. These events include the Oyster Stroll, Downtown Halloween events, and the Miracle on Main Parade and other holiday events. In making their decision, the elected body considered how scaling back these events to meet safety standards would diminish the guest experience. The Mayor and Common Council also took into account the difficulty that participating organizations would likely have in finding volunteers. The Mayor and Common Council charged City staff with exploring event creation for the community while adhering to safety guidelines.

The City continues to monitor developments related to the Governor's Roadmap to Recovery and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Future changes in City operations will continue to prioritize employee well-being while also minimizing health risks. Please check the City website and Facebook page for the most current information on City meetings and Westminster government's operational status.



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## Westminster Police Department

On September 10, 2020, the Westminster Police Department was notified of its selection as a participant in the Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE) Project. The Georgetown University Law Center's Innovative Policing Program created the ABLE Project to bring free evidence-based active bystandership training to law enforcement agencies across the United States and Canada. The Westminster Police Department is one of 25 agencies selected to participate in the inaugural ABLE Train-the-Trainer event. The Department had to provide letters of support from the community as part of its application. The ABLE Project prepares officers to successfully intervene, to prevent harm, and to create a law enforcement culture that supports peer intervention. In addition, the ABLE Project promotes officer health and wellness, a key component of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing.

The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing was created by an executive order signed by United States President Barack Obama on December 18, 2014. Obama created it in response to the unrest in Ferguson, Missouri following the shooting of Michael Brown by a police officer there. The eleven members of the task force included academics, law enforcement officials, and civil rights activists. The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing divided its report recommendations into six pillars. They are:

1. Building Trust and Legitimacy
2. Policy and Oversight
3. Technology and Social Media
4. Community Policing and Crime Reduction
5. Officer Training and Education
6. Officer Safety and Wellness

Additionally, the Police Department applied for, and was awarded, a \$5,000 grant to bring a group of nationally recognized professionals to Carroll County to conduct a symposium entitled, "The Enemy Within," which focuses on law enforcement and first responder stress, PTSD, and suicide prevention. Again, Officer Wellness and Safety is one of the six pillars of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing. Our goals are to promote a department-wide culture of wellness, to provide support and services when needed, and to keep departmental staff healthy. More broadly, working toward these goals will also help the department better serve our community.

## National Night Out 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's National Night Out event was initially postponed from August until October 6. National Night Out enhances the relationship between neighbors and law enforcement, while bringing back a true sense of community. It provides a great opportunity to bring police and neighbors together under positive circumstances. Unfortunately, the ongoing pandemic has forced communities across the country, including Westminster, to cancel their October 6 event.

As the next best thing, the Westminster Police Department is collaborating with the Carroll County Sheriff's Office to create a series of short videos for release during the week of October 6 in the spirit of connecting with our communities. Look for these videos on our social media sites and the City website during the second week of October!





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## Scheduled Yard Waste and Bulk Trash Curbside Collections

Weekly curbside collection of yard waste continues every Wednesday. Yard waste must be in paper bags or bushel containers, and pickups must be scheduled to ensure collection.

The Leaf Vac will begin October 5 and end December 4 for collection of loose leaves. Collection requests must be scheduled via the number below.

Bi-weekly curbside collection of tree limbs and brush, metal and tires, and other bulk trash also continues. Pickup requests must be scheduled in order to guarantee collection on the appropriate date.

To schedule a pickup request for any of the above items, please call:

**410-848-9077**



## Automated City Phone Lines

As part of its ongoing commitment to providing the highest quality service, the City of Westminster recently enhanced its phone system capabilities.

The City continues to see improvements in customer service with the new, automated phone system. When calling 410-848-9000, callers are able to utilize the menu to reach their desired department or a dial-by-name directory.

Direct-dial phone numbers for each department are available by visiting the City's website at [www.WestminsterMD.gov](http://www.WestminsterMD.gov).

